1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

539 Occasionally the old men tell about mysterious tribes which formerly inhabited the country. The following account of the Wiswis Indians was told to me in 1918 by the Miskito Ramón of Burimak (upper Rio Coco):

THE WISWIS LEGEND.—On the left bank of Rio Coco, near the present settlement of Saulala, there used to live a subtribe of either Miskito or Sumu.[a] Having once killed a great number of *wiswis* birds, they become known by the latter name. They refused to pay tribute to the king, and for that reason the latter treated them cruelly, and had them whipped frequently.

One day, while they were out hunting, they killed a number of wild hogs (*wari*), and cut some withes of a variety called *dar*, in order to tie the legs of the animals together and secure the latter on their backs. As soon as they had fastened the withes they could not see the peccaries any longer, although they were able to smell and to feel them. One of them then untied the withes and immediately the animals became visible again. This Indian then tied one of the withes round his own neck, whereupon his companions could not see him any longer. They now realized that the *dar* withe has the property of rendering invisible anything tied with it.

The Wiswis were glad of having made this discovery, and they decided to put it to practical use. When they heard of the king's envoys coming in order to collect the taxes they tied some of these withes round their houses, and the tax collectors were unable to find them or even locate their villages.

In spite of this sorcery the Wiswis were unable to escape the wrath of the king. In order to get away from their oppressive ruler they emigrated toward the interior, wandering overland through the vast savanna, which extends on the left bank of Rio Coco uninterruptedly to Rio Kahka (above Auasbila). From this latter place they are said to have reached Bocay eventually, but no one knows how; some claim, however, that they crossed over to Honduras.

Two rows of little cairns, which stretch in a straight line from Saulala to Rio Kahka, are attributed to the Wiswis. The latter are supposed to have placed them on both sides of their road during their long march inland. These tumuli are from 10 to 16 miles away from Rio Coco; from the village Auasbila it takes about half a day's march to get to them. They are still known among the Miskito by the name *Wiswis kaiwan* "placed by the Wiswis."

524 GAMES AND SPORTS.—The little boys play war and hunting games with toy bows and arrows; the latter are tipped with a wooden knob or with beeswax. Kites (M.: *istapla*), spinning tops (M.: *purmaya*,

[a] Lehmann refers to the *Visises* as a cannibal tribe of unknown origin, which settled at the Mosquito Coast about the twelfth century. These people finally departed, but no one knows whither (Lehmann, b: 716; c: I, 463).

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

purwaya), stilts (M., S.: *umas*) and marbles may occasionally be seen; the spinning tops may be of foreign manufacture, or they are made by the Indians from large seeds through which a stick has been passed. String puzzles or cat's cradle, a common game of our schoolboys, has been observed by the writer among both Miskito and Sumu, but unfortunately he neglected to record any of them. Already Wickham (b: 160; c: 207) records "scratch cradle" among the Sumu of Rio Siquia and notices very rightly that these Indians carry it into far more complicated passages than we do. 524

Hide and seek is known, and the "tiger game" is especially popular. In the latter, one of the boys is supposed to represent the tiger, that is the jaguar or the puma, and he hops around on all fours, imitating the gait and voice of that feline. The other children stand in a file, each one placing the hands upon the shoulders of the one in front of him. The biggest boy is leading while the smallest one is at the rear end. The "tiger" attempts to catch one among the row, but the boy in front outwits him by dashing immediately to the threatened spot. All the time the group keeps on calling "tiger is coming" (M.: *limi dûla;* T., P.: *nawa kdiwa;* U.: *nawa waya*).

Another game, called *uli pulaya* "playing turtle" is described by Bell (b: 151) as follows: "One boy is chosen as the turtle, and swims away to a fixed distance from the rest; then at a signal, he dives, and the other boys try to catch him. As the water of the (Bluefields) lagoon was usually a little muddy from the dashing of the small waves on the half-mud, half-sand of the beaches, it was not easy to see the diving boy in, say, 5 feet of water; besides which they were skillful divers, and could keep long under water. The boy dives to the bottom, and keeps to it. Drawing up his right leg, he buries his toe in the sand, and kicks out violently, sending his body flying along the bottom, to rise finally to the surface in some most unexpected position. The 'turtle' waits to rest till his pursuers are too near, then dives again, and possibly shoots between them, rising to blow far behind them. Finally the 'turtle' is caught and brought to the captain or quartermaster (*kwatmas*) of the boys, who is supposed to kill it by slapping with the palm on the top of the head."

In another game, called *ilili pulaya* "playing at shark," the diving boy, representing that fearful fish, stealthily dives among the others, and pinches or bites them under water. This is a favorite game, which fun and fear combine to make very exciting (Bell, b: 152).

Wickham (b: 160; c: 200–201) states that the Ulwa of Rio Escondido "have a singular mode of playing with staves or short poles, which they grasp in the middle, and then, standing opposite each other, holding them at arm's length, strike each end alternately together with all their force. The opponents are matched in pairs, and in appearance it rather reminds one of the old English quarter- 526